

of two dollars, except on route number six, where the rate was to be two dollars and fifty cents.

The petition of the persons seeking the contract on route number six, designated Norfolk, Va., as the American port, but Mr. Florence, who is always alive to the interests of Philadelphia, substituted it for Norfolk in the bill which he introduced. The approximate value of American commerce now annually passing over this route is represented in the petition as \$25,000,000. The competition for the carrying of that trade ought to induce the establishment of the line, with or without a government subsidy.

In the Senate, on one of the closing days of the session, Mr. Kennedy, of Maryland, introduced a bill to establish a line of mail steamships between the ports of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah and New Orleans, in the United States, and Southampton, in England, and thence in auxiliary steamers, carrying the closed United States mails for the Continent to the ports of Havre, in France, and to Antwerp, in Belgium—the departures to be four times in each month from the United States, in alternate weeks, from the ports aforesaid, and four times in each month from England.

Both these propositions will probably be renewed at this session, without, however, any very flattering prospects of success.

#### POSTAL REFORM.

It is not at all unlikely that some plan will be matured and adopted at this session to make the Post Office Department of the government self-sustaining. That is not to be done, however, by taking any retrograde movement in regard to cheap postage, as was contemplated by Senator Hunter's bill, introduced at last session, which was to raise the uniform rate of postage for any distance between places in the United States, not exceeding three thousand miles, to five cents, and for any greater distance, to ten cents. No more popular piece of legislation than that could be introduced in, and yet, although the Senate did not act on Senator Hunter's bill, it did enact into law the new rate of postage for the General Post Office.

Appropriation bills, amendments, however, in which the House refused to concur, and which consequently failed. To make the Post Office Department self-sustaining it is not necessary to increase the rates of postage. All that is required is to abolish the franking privilege, and have no drawbacks by mail any more than by railroad. That will bring the receipts and expenditures of the Post Office into closer relationship, and besides that, it will save the general government at least two millions a year in the public printing line. Where hundreds of thousands of documents are now ordered to be printed for distribution by Congressmen among their constituents, and to supply pressing paper to the grocers of Washington, not a thousand would be ordered if the Congressmen had to pay for new transmission to his district by post or express. It costs the government no less than \$7,000 a year to send Foster Berne's public documents home to Salt Lake City. The Senate, indeed, did go so far in the right way, last session, as to attach to the Post Office appropriation bill an amendment abolishing the franking privilege, but the House refused to concur in it, partly because it was a bill which should have been treated in an independent bill, instead of being tacked on to an amendment. The Senate also passed some very ridiculous amendments to the same bill, which the House also rejected. One was to have the Post Office advertisements of untried letters published in the newspaper, not that had the largest circulation in the town or city, but in the one that had the largest circulation in the town or city. The other was to have newspapers from getting their correspondence out of the Post Office except during the regular hours of business. What Senator Colman's object could be in trying to have such a rule adopted we do not know. It is possible that it may not have been intended as a flag against newspapers, which sometimes are allowed such privileges; but, if not, he has been fighting windmills in the bill he introduced, the first section of which provided:

That after the close of the receipt, and delivery of letters, papers and mail matter for all persons at the same time, and no pretense or arrangement shall be allowed by which any person or persons, for any consideration, shall obtain their letters or papers earlier than others, or shall receive their letters or papers on applying therefor.

There is a very strong feeling prevailing in regard to the abuse of the franking privilege; and it is not at all impossible that it will be abolished this session, as it has been abolished in Great Britain, where even the Queen has to pay the postage on her own letters. Its abolition would be a saving to the Treasury of not less than five millions a year.

#### THE TARIFF.

During the course of the last session the Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives, of which Mr. John C. Calhoun, of New York, is chairman, devoted an immense amount of labor and time to the maturing of measures calculated to benefit the commerce of the country, and although the bills reported by them were not acted upon, their labors, it is to be hoped, are not to be without result. The revision of the tariff, with a view to the imposition of a higher scale of duties, to increase the revenues of the country, will doubtless be attempted this session, but there is little prospect of any change being effected in that respect between this and the 4th of March next. It is said that the Secretary of the Treasury is of opinion that with a revival of trade the receipts of import duties under the present tariff will soon be adequate to the wants of government. He may not, therefore, recommend a revision. He estimates the receipts for the next fiscal year at \$50,000,000, and the expenditures at \$55,000,000, so that another loan will be required. He is also of opinion that the tariff is too low, and that it is not to be raised, but that it would be a most important improvement if it were to be amended at all, it is suggested that in regard to many articles special duties will be substituted for the present ad valorem duties.

#### ABOLITION OF IMPORT DUTIES.

Mr. Hayes, of South Carolina, is a firm believer in the policy of free trade and direct taxation. Under a resolution of his select committee he was appointed last session to examine the question, and he, as chairman, presented a report on a reduction of the expenditures of the government, the navigation laws, the existing duties on imports, &c. The question will come up immediately, if not directly, on the adoption of the report.

**COMMODIFICATION OF THE REVENUE LAWS.** The codification of the revenue laws, a work requiring great industry and research, and a thorough knowledge of the subject, was undertaken last session by the Committee on Commerce, and reported to the House by Mr. John C. Calhoun. This bill has been made the special order for the second Wednesday in December, and even if it be not acted on then, it will probably be taken up and passed this session. The bill fills two hundred and eighty-nine printed pages, and as it could not be very intelligently discussed except by those few members who are familiar with the subject, we may presume that Congress will take for granted that it is a well-considered and proper measure, and pass it on faith. During the recess Mr. Calhoun has perfected the bill in regard particularly to the system of measurement of vessels. The present system of estimating the tonnage of vessels by an arbitrary rule of measurement often at once a failure to amount to anything, and the actual capacity being sometimes more than double the registered capacity—and operates injuriously on the models of our marine. Mr. Calhoun proposes to have the registered tonnage correspond exactly with the actual capacity of the vessel, to be ascertained by an interior survey conducted on mathematical principles. He thinks that the change will show the aggregate tonnage of the United States to be from two to three times as large as the present figures would indicate.

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Besides this measure, so important to the commerce of the country and to its revenue, there are other measures pending in either house affecting the same subject more or less remotely. Mr. Calhoun reported a bill from the Committee on Commerce, declaring it felony on the part of a captain, master, or subordinate officer of any passenger ship to seduce or procure any female passenger on the voyage. Senator Seward introduced a similar measure in the Senate, and the Committee on the Judiciary in that body reported back a substitute for it, declaring every captain, commander or other officer, seaman or sailor, of any vessel bringing passengers to the United States who shall, during the voyage of such vessel, or by the exercise of his authority, or by solicitation or the making of gifts or presents, seduce and have illicit connection with any female passenger, guilty of a misdemeanor, liable to be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months, or by a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, no conviction, however, to be had on the testimony of the female seduced, unsupported by other evidence, nor unless an indictment shall be found within two years after the commission of the offense; and provided further, that the subsequent marriage of the parties seducing and seduced may be pleaded in bar of a conviction.

#### CONCERNING REAMERS.

The Senate Committee on Commerce also reported a bill declaring the owners, and in certain cases, the brokers, of American vessels liable in case of damages to any one of its crew who should be maliciated by the master or

mate. This bill, if enacted into a law, will have a salutary effect in checking the brutality of officers towards their crews.

#### SECURITY OF PASSENGERS ON STEAMERS.

There were some half dozen bills and amendments introduced into the two houses last session to provide for the better security of the lives of passengers on board of vessels propelled in whole or in part by steam, and the Committee on Commerce of the House reported, through Mr. E. K. Washburne, a substitute for the bills referred to. Mr. Washburne strove hard last session to have this substitute acted on, but did not succeed. He will have it up again this session. It provides for the inspection of ferry boats, for the employment by them of licensed pilots and licensed engineers, prescribes rules for navigating rivers, canals and lakes, for using signals, lights, &c., regulates the boats' pumps and signal lights of sailing steamers, and goes into a detailed system of legislation calculated to produce greater safety to passengers on steamers.

#### ENROLLMENT OF VESSELS AND RECORDING CONSIGNMENTS.

There were two bills reported from the Committee on Commerce in the Senate amending and defining the act for enrolling and licensing ships or vessels to be employed in the coasting trade and fisheries, and for registering the same—passed Feb. 18, 1858; and the act of July 29, 1850, providing for recording the conveyances of vessels, and for other purposes.

Mr. Cochran's bill for the codification of the revenue laws will probably render unnecessary the passage of these bills.

#### MARINE AND NIGHT SIGNALS.

The Senate Committee on Commerce also reported at the last session a bill to compel all sail vessels of the burden of twenty tons and upwards, navigating the waters of the Northwestern lakes—viz., Lakes Superior, Huron, Michigan, St. Clair, Erie and Ontario—and including the rivers discharging into, or bays and other navigable waters connecting with the same, to be provided with a suitable set of signal lanterns or lighting apparatus, to be approved by the supervising inspector of steamers for the district in which said vessel is enrolled or registered, under the penalty of one hundred dollars fine and liability. The same committee had also referred to it a bill compelling the owner or owners of each sailing ship or vessel of the United States to provide such ship or vessel with a copy of "The American Code of Marine Signals," also with a complete set of Rogers' calm and storm signals, for the purpose of communicating phrases and sentences from said code, and adopting same as the national signals of the United States, under the title of "The American Marine Signals." Provided that the price demanded by the author of said code should not exceed ten dollars for a copy of the same, together with the right to make use of his invention, and that no change should be made in said code without the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury.

#### LANDS FOR THE LANDLESS.

For many Congresses past there have been invariably one or more members in either House whose hobby was the passage of a measure giving homesteads on the public lands gratis to all who might choose to settle on them. Perhaps it would be a more equitable mode of distributing the public lands than consigning them by the thousand square miles to scheming railroad corporations. But yet the homestead bill does not count one-fourth as many friends in Congress as a railroad land grant bill always commands. And so little progress has been ever made in advancing the act to persons who are going further, but the House refused to concur in it, partly because it was a bill which should have been treated in an independent bill, instead of being tacked on to an amendment. The Senate also passed some very ridiculous amendments to the same bill, which the House also rejected. One was to have the Post Office advertisements of untried letters published in the newspaper, not that had the largest circulation in the town or city, but in the one that had the largest circulation in the town or city. The other was to have newspapers from getting their correspondence out of the Post Office except during the regular hours of business. What Senator Colman's object could be in trying to have such a rule adopted we do not know. It is possible that it may not have been intended as a flag against newspapers, which sometimes are allowed such privileges; but, if not, he has been fighting windmills in the bill he introduced, the first section of which provided:

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#### CONCERNING REAMERS.

The Senate Committee on Commerce also reported a bill declaring the owners, and in certain cases, the brokers, of American vessels liable in case of damages to any one of its crew who should be maliciated by the master or

one of the provisions of which was the assignment by the United States to the State of Kentucky of all their interest in the present canal around the Falls of the Ohio river, upon condition that the State of Kentucky should thenceforth cause the said canal to be kept open for the passage of steamboats and other vessels of proper capacity navigating the Ohio river at certain rates of toll, and that no toll should ever be charged on any steamboat or other vessel on account of the troops, property or mails of the United States carried by such steamboat or vessel.

#### LIGHTHOUSE BILL.

Mr. Comins, after great trouble, managed at the close of last session to procure the passage by the House of the bill making appropriations for lighthouses, lightboats, buoys, &c., and providing for the erection and establishment of the same, and for other purposes; but, for want of time, it failed in the Senate. It will probably be one of the first bills passed this session.

#### CLERKS IN THE DEPARTMENTS—SCHEME OF APPOINTMENT.

Some members of the House are very desirous of having a better understood and more immediate right of appointment to clerical offices in the Federal city than they now exercise by means of the influence with the appointing power. Mr. Robt. Smith, of Illinois—the same gentleman who originated the Fort Snelling investigation—introduced a bill last session, which was referred to and reported back by a select committee of seven, enacting—

That hereafter all appointments of clerks and messengers employed, or to be employed, in or connected with the several departments of the government, in the city of Washington, shall be appointed from the several States and Territories of the United States in proportion to the representation of said States and Territories in the House of Representatives, the District of Columbia being deemed, for this purpose, equal to one Congressional district; and also that, in making the selections to fill the aforesaid offices, actual residents of said several States and Territories of the District of Columbia shall in all cases be selected and appointed, and as far as practicable, such selections shall be made from the several Congressional districts of said States and Territories.

This is a ridiculous and impracticable scheme, and it would, if carried out, fill the public offices at Washington with the most incompetent and worthless men, who would be selected only for their political services. As it is, they are quite bad enough; and certainly it would not be for the interest of the country to have them worse. The true policy would be to pass a law directing the President to require from the heads of the various departments returns of all their subordinates, with full observations as to their requirements, habits of industry, and attention to business, authorizing him, from those returns, to advance and to set back or discharge—if he see fit—the clerks, according to their merits or demerits, and then—after such changes, and with a rule regulating future promotion and appointments—declaring their offices permanent, or only to be vacated for cause and on report of misconduct to the appointing power. Such a rule exists in the public offices of all well regulated governments, and would do more than anything else, if applied throughout the whole country, to put down the present demoralizing and degrading system of politics.

#### PUBLIC DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATIVE EMPLOYEES.

There were two bills reported last session in the House for the reform of abuses in regard to public documents. One was reported by Mr. Winslow, from the select committee on the Library; the other by Mr. Hughes, from the select committee on the Conduct and Accounts of the Doorkeeper. The first proposed to place all the public documents printed by order of either House in charge of the Secretary of the Interior, to be drawn from him on requisition by the Clerk of the House, Secretary of the Senate, &c.—thus avoiding collusion between the public printer and the superintendent of the folding room. The second proposed to make the latter office—which is now in the gift of the Doorkeeper—elective by the House, prescribing his duties and responsibilities, and making the clerical force employed by him—with the exception of two permanent clerks—dependent on the authority of the Committee of Accounts. It will be recollected that last session the Doorkeeper was dismissed for having filled the folding room with a needless large number of employees, in disregard of the orders of the Committee of Accounts. These measures need reform, and as a couple of hours will suffice to dispose of them we presume Congress will attend to them immediately. There is also a bill pending—reported by the Committee of Accounts—fixing the number and compensation of clerks, messengers, pages and laborers for the House of Representatives. There is much business about the employment and compensation of these persons, and the defect needs a remedy. The offices in the House, like those in the Senate, should be made permanent.

#### BANKRUPTCY LAW.

Mr. Benjamin, of Ia., introduced in the Senate, on the 4th of May last, a bill to establish a uniform law on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States. It proposes to give the United States District Courts jurisdiction over the matter, and provides for the filing by the debtor of a petition, with an inventory of debts and assets, verified by affidavits, on which he shall be declared a bankrupt, but his debts must not be less than \$2,000. The provisions are numerous, being designed to meet all the phases of the question. It ought to be acted on at this session.

#### THE PATENT OFFICE LAWS.

The Committee on Patents in the House, through Mr. Stewart, of Md., reported, on the 16th of March, a bill in the nature of a substitute for one introduced by Mr. Taylor, of N. Y., entitled a bill to promote the progress of the useful arts, to regulate the granting of patents for inventions, and to repeal all acts and parts of acts heretofore made for that purpose.

In the Senate, also, a bill having the same general objects in view was reported by Mr. Evans, from the Committee on Patents and the Patent Office. The subject is too intricate and too little understood generally to give ground for the belief that it will be disposed of, or even touched, this session.

#### COMPENSATION OF UNITED STATES DISTRICT ATTORNEYS, ETC.

An attempt was made last session to systematize and fix the compensation of District Attorneys, Marshals and Clerks of the Court and District Courts of the United States. A bill for that purpose was reported from the select committee on the Judiciary, which in the House was introduced by Mr. Phillips, of Pennsylvania. As it is a mere matter of fixing the fee to which these officers are entitled, a law on the subject will probably be passed this session.

#### WRITS OF HABEAS CORPUS IN UNITED STATES COURTS.

The Committee on the Judiciary in the Senate reported, on the 4th of March last, a bill authorizing the Judge before whom a conviction was procured in any of the United States Courts to reserve any question of law for decision by the Supreme Court of the United States, and in the meantime to resume execution of the judgment pronounced. This measure is deemed necessary and important, and, as there can be no objection to it, it will probably become a law.

#### FRENCH REPUDIATION BILL.

That long pending measure, to provide for the ascertainment and satisfaction of claims of American citizens for depredations committed by the French privateers on the 31st day of July, 1861, will be up again this session, it having been made the special order in the House for the 16th of January next. It provides for the appointment of three commissioners, to meet in Washington, and to decide within two years the amount and validity of all the claims to be made under the act, the whole amount being limited to five millions of dollars, and the aggregate of the awards exceeds that sum they are to be paid pro rata. Most of these claims are bogus, and where any of them are at all valid they are grossly exaggerated. It is supposed that fifty thousand dollars would more than compensate the losses inflicted on the ocean.

#### PENSION BILLS.

Two of the Tennessee members in the House (Moore, Savage and Maynard) made repeated efforts last session to obtain the passage of a bill granting pensions to the officers and soldiers of the war with Great Britain of 1812, and those engaged in Indian wars during that period. They did not succeed, however, and they are not very likely to succeed this session either, although Mr. Savage's bill is made the special order for the second Tuesday in December. Those who sustained any injury in the service from wounds or exposure have been already provided with pensions, and all who actually served have got land warrants. But these bills go further, and propose to give to all who were enrolled for six months, whether they ever saw service or not, pension equal to the full pay of the rank they held. It would be about as sensible a proposition to give pensions to the men who have done nothing in the emancipated ground in Sicily for the last three months, and, indeed, they have suffered more hardship in that duty than many nine per cent of the soldiers of 1812. This pension law would tax the treasury to the amount of eleven millions a year certainly, and probably to the amount of twenty millions, and would be the entering wedge for a great pensioning system like that of Great Britain.

#### THE AMERICAN CITIES.

The American cities requires no such inducement to make him take up arms for his country, and this proposition would be repugnant to every high minded man who enrolled himself for defense in 1812. It is got up by some scheming pension agent for plunder, and is supported by

some Senators and members of Congress for electioneering purposes.

In the Senate a bill explanatory of an act entitled "An act in addition to certain acts granting bounty land to certain officers and soldiers who have been engaged in the military service of the United States," approved March 3, 1855, was reported back adversely from the Committee on Pensions; and in the House a bill was reported by the Committee on Invalid Pensions to equitize the army, navy and marine pensions.

In addition to these, the Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, in the House, reported back a bill introduced by Mr. Grow, to provide for the settlement of the claims of the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary army, and of the widows and children of those who died in the service. This bill provides—

That the officers of the army of the Revolution who were entitled to half pay for life, under the resolutions of Congress of the 21st and 22nd of October, 1780; the 17th of January, 1781; the 8th of May, 1781, and the 8th of March, 1782, shall be entitled to receive the same, although such officers may have received in full the bounty land commutation of full pay for five years, under the resolution of Congress of the 22d of March, 1783; and directs that it shall be the duty of the proper accounting officer of the Treasury, when applied for that purpose by any one entitled to receive, or his heir or guardian, to ascertain what is due to such officer for the balance of his bounty land, and to pay half pay to the day of his death, and to pay the same to the person so entitled to receive it.

This bill is founded upon a bad principle. No officer of the Revolution would have been mean enough to take advantage of it, though surviving relatives may. They had the choice of taking half pay for life or full pay for five years, and to those who chose the latter it is now proposed to give, through their legal representatives, the value of that half pay that they declined to take. The pretence is, that owing to the appreciation of the national currency at the time the certificates were sold at a large discount, but that is a flimsy argument, because the government redeemed them at their full nominal value. If the Revolutionary officers had been full of such sort of persons as this bill contemplates for beneficiaries, our independence would hardly have been gained in that struggle. This bill is an insult to their memory.

There is also a bill pending, introduced by Mr. Davis, of Massachusetts, to amend the law granting land to soldiers and seamen, so as to include those engaged on board private armed vessels regularly commissioned by the United States. This bill was referred to the Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, and a motion is pending to reconsider the vote by which it was so referred.

#### COST OF INDIAN WARS.

Oregon and Washington have presented claims against the general government for several millions of dollars for services of volunteers in repelling Indian aggressions. These wars are usually manufactured by the countenances during seasons for profit and excitement, but we suppose the general government must induce the settlers and foot the bills. A new system of dealing with the Indian tribes, as well in reference to hostilities as to their lands and reservations, should certainly be initiated by Congress.

#### EXPEDITION AGAINST THE MORMONS.

It is quite probable that some exciting discussions will be caused in both houses in reference to the Mormon question and the cost of the expedition to Utah.

#### INVESTIGATING COMMITTEES.

The proceedings of the Willmet's Point Investigating Committee at last session have still to be passed on by the House. The committee to investigate the conduct and accounts of the late Clerk of the House (Mr. Cullop) and the committee to investigate the conduct and accounts of the two last Doorkeeper, hold over from last session, and are to have their reports presented and disposed of. The revelations of frauds that have come to light during vacation in reference to the passage of the Wisconsin and Iowa land grants may possibly give work to some more investigating committees.

#### INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT LAW.

Mr. Morris, of Pennsylvania, early in the last session introduced a bill in the House establishing an international copyright law, but it never came up for discussion or action. He proposes to extend the benefits of the existing copyright law to all authors and proprietors not citizens of the United States, who shall, within one month of the publication of any book, musical composition or work of art in the country of which they are citizens, cause the same to be printed and published in the United States. After the lapse of a month, without such publication here, they may be imported or printed by any person. This act would make a good deal for American publishers, however little it might benefit foreign authors.

#### CONSULATE AT ROSARIO, SOUTH AMERICA.

Mr. John Cochran, from the Committee on Commerce, reported last session a bill for the establishment of a United States Consulate at Rosario, on the river Parana, in the Province of Santa Fe, of the Argentine Confederation, which was not disposed of.

#### THE NEW YORK BARGE OFFICE.

The same gentleman also reported a bill making an appropriation for strengthening and securing the foundation of the United States barge office in the city of New York. These foundations are evidently veryrickety, and no time should be lost in having them strengthened and secured. A few thousand dollars would do it.

#### IMPEACHMENT OF JUDGE WATKINS.

The Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives has had a great deal of trouble in some Congresses with the case of John C. Watkins, United States District Judge of Texas. The Legislature of that State has time and again passed resolutions calling on Congress for his impeachment on the ground of his having become corruptly interested in the results of important suits pending in his Court in relation to land grants in Texas. The Judiciary Committee at one Congress reported against his impeachment. At the close of the last Congress it reported unanimously that he should be impeached—but then Congress expired, and the report could not be acted on. His case was again before the Judiciary Committee during the most of last session, and a great mass of testimony was taken. The committee, however, was equally divided on the question of his impeachment. Four of the members presented a report in favor of it, and four against it. The sixth member did not attend the sitting of the committee, and therefore did not sign either report. The testimony was printed, and has been in the hands of members during the recess. They will have had sufficient time to inform themselves of all the facts, and to vote intelligently for or against Judge Watkins' impeachment. If the vote be for it, then it will devolve upon the Senate to try him. The trial would occupy weeks, if not months, unless the Judge would waive the oral examination of witnesses and let the notes of testimony taken before the Judiciary Committee be read as evidence.

#### DROPPED AND RETIRED NAVAL OFFICERS.

Under the provisions of two joint resolutions passed at last session the President was authorized to restore to the active or reserve list of the navy any officers who were dropped or retired under the act of February 28, 1855, to promote the efficiency of the navy. His authority in the premises terminates, however, on the 1st of January, 1859. It is said that he has completed his examination and is ready to send his report to Congress. Most of the officers, it is rumored, will be restored to active duty. Such reappointments as he shall have made will come before the Senate for confirmation. This will involve some labor on that body. There is also the case of Commander Brookwell, who was court-martialed for an alleged disobedience of the orders of Commodore Merine, and who was sentenced to be suspended. The President, however, refused to sanction the finding and sentence of the Court.

#### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

There were several measures pending at the close of last session, and that will be brought up at this session, for the benefit of the city of Washington and of the District of Columbia. Among these are: a bill to establish an auxiliary guard for the protection of public and private property in the city of Washington, a bill to organize a police department in the District of Columbia, and a report relative to the abolition of tolls on the several turnpike roads within the District. It is a notorious and at the same time a most disgraceful fact, that the streets of Washington city are more insecure and more infested with rowdies than even the streets of Baltimore. The police are inefficient, the criminal court of the District is a living hell upon justice, and unfortunately the executive prerogative of pardon is too often extended to converted thieves and the very worst of the Capital on a beautiful moonlight evening last winter. Two respectable citizens, both holding government offices, were deliberately fired at by robbers by two ruffians, who had no other motive for the act than a selfish thirst of blood. Both fell, pierced with three bullets each. One of them lingered for months in agony and then followed to the grave his wife, who died from the shock of seeing the bleeding body of her husband borne home. After some weeks, the murderers were arrested, and so desperate were their character and that of their associates in the city that a police officer who saw the occurrences actually refused to testify until he was coerced by the threat of imprisonment. They were tried and convicted—one of

murder, the other of an attempt to commit murder. The latter was sentenced to the penitentiary for eight years, the former to the gallows. And yet there were respectable persons found in Washington to take an interest in saving this ruffian's life; and so powerful were their appeals to the Executive for clemency that the gallows was cheated of its victim, and the condemned escaped with the punishment of imprisonment. It was from that and other similar outrages perpetrated about the same time that other efforts were made in Congress to establish a strong police force in Washington; but though there was no doubt as to the necessity for such action, there were enough members, from among those who thought that the citizens ought to provide their own police, and those who did not wish to give additional patronage to the Executive, to prevent the passage of the measure.

The proposition will probably be renewed this session, as well as the other two propositions about the Fire Department and the turnpike roads. There is also a bill pending in the Senate to enlarge the public grounds surrounding the Capitol. There is no limiting the expenditure to which this would give rise, for not only will the appraised value of the ground taken have to be paid by the United States, but all property holders for miles east of the Capitol will bring claims against the government for depreciation of their property, owing to the change of the road leading to it.

#### NAVY DEPOT ON BLYTHE ISLAND, ETC.

Mr. Seward, of Georgia, proposed the passage of an act in January, 1857, establishing a navy depot on Blythe island, at Brunswick, on the coast of Georgia. He introduced, last session, a bill to amend that act, to make further appropriations to prosecute said object, and to make such improvements as are necessary for the repairs and construction of vessels of war. The bill was committed to the Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, a committee which, for matters outside of the general appropriation bills, is facetiously known as "the tomb of the Capulets." Mr. Seward moved, on the 5th of May, to reconsider the vote by which the bill was so referred—and that motion is still unopposed. There is also a bill pending, reported from the Post Office Committee, providing for certain public buildings for post office and other government purposes.

#### SUPPLEMENTS IN THE TERRITORIES.

A bill to regulate and make uniform the right of suffrage in the Territories of the United States was, on the 10th of May last, committed to the same committee. Mr. Zollicoffer made a similar motion, which is also still unopposed.

#### PRIVATE BILLS.

The following private bills, which were on the calendar of the House, were not disposed of at the adjournment of the last session—